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ABSTRACT

A study examined conflict resolution strategies employed by a kindergarten teacher with her class of 22 students. Naturalistic observation was used to investigate the strategies in instances of four specific behaviors: being aggressive, blaming, bossing, and tattling. The investigation revealed that, after repeated exposure to and numerous applications of the teacher's conflict resolution strategies, the students were increasingly able to solve problems independently with little, if any, teacher intervention. Additionally, the children often applied the conflict resolution strategies without the teacher's assistance. The teacher reported that the classroom atmosphere drastically improved over the course of the school year as the students were more willing to take responsibility for their actions and could more readily provide solutions to their problems. Although the naturalistic observation made it impossible to measure if the students had internalized the conflict resolution strategies, parents reported that their children were applying the newly learned problem-solving skills at home. The study results suggest that the basic interpersonal skills gained from employing effective conflict resolution strategies such as active listening, restating information, brainstorming solutions, and reaching consensus are essential problem-solving skills that will enable children to interact positively with others throughout their lifetime. Ten appendices containing conflict resolution tips and examples are included. Contains 20 references. (Author/TJQ)

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Conflict Resolution: Teaching Social Skills In A Kindergarten Classroom

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Running Head: TEACHING SOCIAL SKILLS IN A KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM

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Abstract

Stuart (1991) examined conflict resolution programs in elementary schools. Stuart found that these programs improve the overall classroom atmosphere. By improving problem-solving skills, increasing self-esteem, and having students take responsibility for their actions, tension is re. ced among students. In the present study, we examined effective conflict resolution strategies modeled by a kindergarten teacher. We investigated strategies employed in a classroom of 22 students by observing and recording instances of four specific behaviors: aggression, blaming, bossing, and tattling. We hypothesized that utilizing systematic conflict resolution strategies will encourage students to solve their own conflicts while improving their social skills. In accordance with our expectations, we found that these systematic strategies enabled students to solve problems with little, if any, assistance from the teacher.

Conflict Resolution: Teaching Social Skills in a Kindergarten Classroom

Introduction

At the beginning of recess Mrs. M's kindergarten class poured through the school doors. Laughter and screams filled the air, as the children made their daily leaps toward the monkey bars and the giant set of swings. Midway through recess, four students drifted away from the rest of their classmates and huddled over the forbidden sand pile that was not part of their regular playing area. Despite Mrs. M's instructions for her students to refrain from playing in the sand at recess, on this sunny, autumn afternoon the sand pile was just too tempting to pass up. As the students began carelessly playing with the sand, Mrs. M's biggest fear suddenly came true: sand had gotten into one of her students' eyes. The frantic little girl, whom we will call "Ann" for the purposes of this paper, let out an alarming scream. Mrs. M immediately terminated the remainder of recess and led her children back inside.

Once the children were all back in the classroom,

Mrs. M signaled to her students to sit in a circle on the floor because they were going to have a much needed class meeting. Mrs. M was about to turn this sand-throwing problem into a learning experience by following the six steps in her conflict resolution approach (see Appendix A). She began by having the students identify the problem. Specifically, she guided a discussion on the dangers of throwing sand, while the students shared reasons why it was inappropriate. Mrs. M made sure that the children did not focus on *who* thre the sand (in fact, most students never found out who it was that threw the sand), but instead she had them deliberate *why* throwing sand was unacceptable and *how* they would prevent this problem from occurring in the future. During the discussion, students began to empathize with "Ann" and the pain she was experiencing by having had sand thrown in her eye. That is, students attacked the problem rather than each other. During the resolution process, students refrained from name calling, blaming, and other disrespectful behaviors (see Appendix B). Students also listened with an open mind as they shared their

feelings with one another. After the students had ample opportunity to share and respect each others' feelings about the problem, they democratically came up with solutions to prevent its reoccurrence. Mrs. M had successfully assisted the students in a child-centered and child-directed class meeting.

Using Mrs. M's approach, students at the county school in which we worked increased their self-esteem by taking full responsibility for their actions and independently solving their own class conflict. During the interaction, students were able to practice communicating with one another as they expressed their feelings about the situation and empathized with "Ann" as they reached consensus about ways to solve their dilemma.

This observation implies that children benefit from educators who are willing to redirect inappropriate behaviors by modeling conflict resolution strategies. When the children in Mrs. M's class solve problems in accordance with her approach, they improve their overall classroom interactions (Mrs. M, Personal Communications, 1994).

The Problem

The purpose of this study is to examine the ways educators can teach problem solving skills to elementary school students by helping the students implement effective conflict resolution strategies when conflicts arise.

In the current study, we explored the findings of Lora Stuart (1991). Specifically, we examined the conflict resolution strategies employed by Mrs. M in her kindergarten classroom, regarding four specific behaviors: aggression, blaming, bossing, and tattling.

We hypothesized that systematic conflict resolution strategies, modeled and mediated by the teacher, will teach students to solve their own conflicts and will improve their social skills.

Review of the Literature

Conflict is a situation in which the people involved are frustrated because they feel unable to satisfy some of their needs. The needs and wants of each person or group are incompatible with those of the others involved in the conflict (Harden, 1984). Children have many needs, such as the need for

friendship, power, and self-esteem. In any classroom environment, there are bound to be incidences in which the needs of one student are incompatible with those of another student. If these conflicts go unresolved, they may eventually lead to disruptive behavior in the classroom. Therefore, it is imperative that teachers examine the conflicts that do occur in their classrooms and provide an opportunity for their resolution before they escalate. When the teacher makes an effort to turn classroom conflicts into learning experiences, the students benefit and the likelihood that the same conflicts will reoccur is reduced (Kreidler, 1984).

If for some reason students are unable to solve their own problems, the teacher will need to act as a mediator (see Appendix C). The role of the teacher as a mediator is to listen impartially without taking sides in the argument and to help the students reach an agreement (Schmidt & Friedman, 1987). While mediating a student conflict, the teacher makes the students listen to one another and repeat what the other student has said and does not allow for interruption by either party involved. After the students talk about the

problem, the teacher summarizes what he or she thinks the students are saying to ensure that the students know how the other parties involved perceive the problem. Next, the teacher asks the students to explain to one another how they feel and then he or she points out areas of agreement. Then, the teacher asks the students to offer solutions to the problem and also helps them to evaluate these solutions. Finally, the teacher helps the students reach a fair agreement (Schmidt & Friedman, 1987). (For examples of teacher-mediated conflicts, see Appendices F, G, H, I, & J)

Effective conflict resolution strategies have numerous advantages for students (see Appendix D). For example, children improve their problem-solving skills and become independent thinkers. Such a context encourages students to discuss their problems and offer alternative solutions that are fair for each party involved in the conflict. Additionally, the communication skills of children are enhanced because students must express their problems and feelings in a straightforward way. Furthermore, when working through a conflict, children gain an awareness of the

viewpoints of their fellow students. Thus, the perspective-taking skills of the students are enhanced (Miller, 1993). Finally, students are better able to discuss their disagreements as they collaboratively problem solve.

The overall classroom atmosphere is also enriched as a result of using such conflict resolution strategies. For example, academic learning time increases because conflicts are quickly resolved by the students with minimal, if any, intervention by the teacher. Thus, fewer interruptions occur during class time. Furthermore, successful implementation of these conflict resolution strategies reduces occurrences of misbehavior and lessens tension, thereby improving classroom interactions.

One major disadvantage of implementing such a conflict resolution approach in a classroom is the time investment needed to introduce the appropriate problem-solving strategies to students. A teacher should plan to invest a great deal of time and effort to create an environment that is open and trusting, where children feel free to share their thoughts and

emotions, because the resolution of any conflict is dependent upon such a climate (Harden, 1984). Although it may be time consuming, over the long run, implementing such a process actually saves time later because fewer disruptions occur. One teacher at another school in the county agreed that implementing a conflict resolution strategy takes a great deal of time initially, but felt the time necessary for implementation was worth utilizing such an approach. She stated, "It costs more instructional time at the beginning, but later it saves you time" (Stuart, 1991, p. 24).

Time should not be the determining factor as to whether or not teachers choose to implement such strategies in their classrooms. There are programs that help teachers minimize preparation time needed for the development and implementation of conflict resolution strategies. For example, Teaching Individual Protective Strategies (TIPS) program is designed for use in kindergarten through high school in the school system in which we coducted our study. The goals of this program are to: promote and maintain

positive student attitudes and behavior and to assist students in meeting their responsibilities to help insure the safety and welfare of self and others (TIPS, 1979).

Even though the particular school in which we worked has no definitive conflict resolution program, its goal is to maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect and harmony. There is one general rule for conflict resolution: Disagreements are expected to be settled in a peaceful and fair manner. Thus, the faculty and staff model appropriate conflict resolution strategies so that students are able to solve conflicts fairly and independently (Mrs. M, Personal Communications, 1994).

Research indicates that teachers and administrators at other elementary schools, also without a specific resolution program, strive to facilitate independent problem-solving skills among students by using strategies similar to Mrs. M's. For example, Stuart (1991) found that many elementary educators model a variety of problem-solving techniques so that students may apply these strategies on their own when a conflict arises. One teacher at the school

where Stuart conducted her research feels that teacher intervention is only necessary when the safety of the children is jeopardized. When student safety is not threatened, the students are expected to formulate their own solutions to problems (Stuart, 1991).

Initially, teachers may find it beneficial to give students several conflict scenarios and ask them how they would respond if the problems involved them. Children need to have a great deal of practice with solving conflicts before they can begin to internalize the behaviors associated with a conflict resolution process. "In order for students to learn to express their needs, rights, and feelings in a way that is direct and honest, and non-threatening, it will take practice" (Conn, 1989, p. 20).

Mrs. M believes that role play is important at the beginning of the school year. She introduces some of her conflict resolution strategies through activities suggested in the TIPS (1979) manual. Initially, she plays a more active role in the resolution process and gradually, throughout the school year, the children are able to take more responsibility for their own actions.

For example, six to eight weeks after the school year begins, Mrs. M serves only as a reference to students as they attempt to work through their conflicts. At this point, she feels that the best way for her students to learn how to effectively solve conflicts is for them to engage in the resolution process themselves as the conflicts naturally occur (Mrs. M, Personal Communications, 1994).

After repeated exposure to and numerous applications of Mrs. M's conflict resolution strategies, the students learn a pattern of behavior which helps them to communicate fairly and directly (see Appendix E). First, students learn to respectfully address the person with whom they are in conflict. Additionally, children learn how to state their feelings, while explaining how the problem personally affected them. Remaining focused on the problem enables students to avoid blaming one another, to refrain from making excuses for their behavior, and most importantly, to abstain from making personal attacks against their classmates. The children also learn to offer alternative solutions to problems so

that their conflicts may result in a win-win situation (Schmidt & Friedman, 1987).

Stuart (1991) examined conflict resolution programs in elementary schools. She found that these programs stress life-skills such as: active listening, paraphrasing information, stating feelings, brainstorming solutions and examining potential solutions to problems. Her qualitative feedback (interviews and surveys) supported the use of conflict resolution programs. Such programs reduced tension in the classroom, enhanced students' self-esteem, increased student responsibility and academic learning time, improved problem-solving skills, communication, teamwork, critical thinking skills, and overall student interactions (Stuart, 1991).

In addition, Hans Toch (1980) indicated that people who lack appropriate social skills are the most prone to choose violent solutions to interpersonal problems. Thus, one way to alleviate such violence is to train people how to communicate anger and criticism in constructive ways, how to negotiate and compromise when conflicts arise, and how to be more sensitive to

the needs and desires of others. Moreover, in an experiment investigating the effects of previous training on post-frustration behavior, Joel Davitz (1952) found that children who are trained to solve conflicts appropriately, responded to frustration and anger more constructively than those who had not received the training.

Methodology

Subjects: This study included 22 kindergartners (13 males, 9 females), whose ages ranged from 5-6 years old.

Measures: In order to maintain interrater reliability, my colleague and I operationally defined the four specific behaviors in question: aggression, blaming, bossing, and tattling. We operationalized aggressive behavior into two distinct categories: hostile aggression and instrumental aggression. Hostile aggression is any behavior intended to harm another person either physically or emotionally. Instrumental aggression is aimed at possessing objects (Sroufe & Cooper, 1988). We defined tattling as any occasion in which a student approaches the teacher to inform her

about the actions of another student. Bossing refers to any situation in which one student gives orders to another, particularly in an arrogant or domineering manner. Blaming describes an instance in which a student holds another at fault for something.

Design: Using naturalistic observations, my colleague and I observed and manually recorded the instances of student conflicts and the strategies used by the children in the process of resolving their conflicts. We both recorded each occurrence of the four behaviors in question to increase the accuracy of the data collection. Thus, our sensitivity to interrater reliability enabled us to accurately represent the strategies employed by Mrs. M and her students during each dispute.

Analysis: We began our data analysis by placing all of our observations into one of four piles: aggression, blaming, bossing, and tattling. Next, we compared our detailed notes to decide which recorded incident of each behavior most clearly illustrates Mrs. M serving as a mediator as the students resolved their conflicts. Then, we noted the six steps of Mrs. M's conflict

resolution process (see Appendix A) used throughout the student confrontation to illustrate how Mrs. M employs her strategies as the opportunity naturally arises during conflicts (see Appendices F, G, H, I, & J). For the purposes of this paper, all students' names were changed in the scenarios featured in Appendices F, G, H, I, & J.

Results

In accordance with our expectations, my colleague and I found that utilizing systematic conflict resolution strategies will encourage students to solve their own conflicts while improving their social skills. After repeated exposure to and numerous applications of Mrs. M's conflict resolution strategies, the students were increasingly able to solve problems independently with little, if any, intervention from their teacher.

Even though it is impossible when using naturalistic observations to measure whether or not the children have internalized Mrs. M's conflict resolution strategies, we have reason to believe that this is the case. For example, parents frequently reported that

their children were applying their newly learned problem-solving skills at home. In one case, a little girl in Mrs. M's class was talking with her mother when her mother suddenly interrupted her. Interrupting is one of the behaviors forbidden during conflict resolution. Thus, the little girl replied, "Mom, don't step on my words," just as Mrs. M would have said had she been present. This familiar phrase is often employed by Mrs. M in her efforts to teach the children to refrain from interrupting.

Additionally, the children often applied Mrs. M's strategies without her assistance. On one of the many occasions, two students were angrily engaged in shoving one another when a third student intervened and quickly ended the conflict. This student reminded her classmates to "Use your mouth, not your hands when you're angry." This again is a frequently used rule of thumb Mrs. M insists the students adhere to each time physical contact becomes involved in the conflicts. Incredibly, the children were able to conquer the conflicts themselves just as effectively as if the teacher had intervened.

Discussion

Many school systems seem to believe that problem solving is the sole responsibility of teachers and administrators. Our data suggest that this is not the case. In fact, having students employ appropriate conflict resolution strategies such as those used in Mrs. M's classroom, has numerous advantages (see Appendix D). By promoting student autonomy and self-directed learning, we are preparing students to become independent problem solvers, which will enable them to respond to the challenges of our rapidly changing world.

In this study, my colleague and I used naturalistic observation because we believed that a qualitative approach would provide us with the most accurate and detailed description of the resolution process and behaviors in which we were interested. In order to increase interrater reliability, we both observed and manually recorded all conflicts involving aggression, blaming, bossing, and tattling.

Initially, we used a video camera to record conflicts to increase the consistency of our

handwritten data. In an attempt to investigate student conflicts as they naturally occur without influencing their outcomes, we placed the video camera in a remote corner of the classroom. Unfortunately, this posed a number of problems; namely, visibility and auditory difficulties. For instance, because the recorder was conspicuously located, it was impossible to focus on conflicts that occurred on the other side of the room. Furthermore, student interactions, particularly those that took place near the recorder, often impaired the visibility of recording student conflicts. In addition, the video recorder could not overcome the noise level of the students. Therefore it was difficult to hear what students were saying to one another as they engaged in the conflict resolution process.

Further, the presence of the video camera caused students to behave differently than they would have if the video recorder had not been present. Thus, we decided to eliminate videotaping in order to keep our observations free from such reactive behaviors (Ray & Ravizza, 1988).

Even though implementing conflict resolution strategies in the classroom requires a great deal of time and effort initially (due to the necessity of introduction, role play, and repeated practice), our findings suggest that the time necessary for implementation is definitely worthwhile. Mrs. M indicated that it generally takes about six to eight weeks for her students to get acclimated to school and during this time many conflicts occur. Therefore, she deems it necessary for students to implement her conflict resolution strategies as soon as the school year begins. Although she acknowledges the amount of time involved, she stressed that time is saved over the long run (Mrs. M, Personal Communications, 1994).

Even though Mrs. M initially plays a key role in the resolution of student conflicts, she becomes progressively less involved over the course of the school year as the students are more able to settle disagreements on their own. Thus, she is able to devote more time to teaching and assisting students in their work rather than intervening in student conflicts (Mrs. M, Personal Communications, 1994).

Interestingly, we found that most of the conflicts we observed occurred during transition times. Regardless of whether students were getting in line for lunch, or for a drink of water, or were going to the bathroom between activities, conflicts were more likely to take place. Perhaps because the transitions are less structured than academic learning time, they are more inviting to disruptive behavior.

According to Mrs. M, the overall classroom atmosphere has drastically improved throughout the school year. Thus, fewer conflicts have taken place during the second half of the school year compared to the first half. The students are more willing to take responsibility for their actions and can more readily provide solutions to their problems rather than focusing on the trivial aspects of their conflicts, such as who was responsible for initiating the conflict. Thus, the maturation of problem-solving skills has led to an improvement in the classroom atmosphere (Mrs. M, Personal Communications, 1994).

The basic interpersonal skills gained from employing effective conflict resolution strategies such

as active listening, restating information, brainstorming solutions, and reaching consensus are essential in many facets of our lives. Their utility extends beyond the classroom. In fact, the ability or inability to work in a group influences each interaction that we make with other people. For example, interactions with our family, classmates, friends, teammates, as well as those in the professional world, are contingent upon effective application of such skills.

Thus, solutions to our educational problems must also include a commitment to life-long learning (National Commission on Excellence in Education 1983). Therefore, as educators, our obligation to students goes beyond teaching factual information and conceptual knowledge to ensuring that students gain essential problem-solving skills which will enable them to interact positively with others throughout their lifetime.

Recognizing that conflict resolution skills are as crucial to life-long success as reading, writing, and arithmetic, some educators advocate that conflict

resolution is so important that it should be considered the "fourth R" (i.e., "resolution") in the public school curriculum at all grade levels (Stuart, 1991).

Research about conflict resolution is a largely neglected area even though its effective implementation reaps enormous benefits and student gains (see Appendices D & E).

After considering the necessity for students to attain these life-skills, my partner and I would like to pose four critical questions that need to be addressed in future research:

1. Why do so many school systems neglect to adopt conflict resolution programs?
2. Why does the curriculum in many teacher education programs (teacher training) fail to include courses on conflict resolution management strategies which will prepare teachers to deal with student controversies?
3. Why are conflict resolution programs such a largely neglected area in Education when the benefits immensely exceed the costs?
4. If children are not provided with the

> opportunity to develop appropriate social behaviors in our schools, (in the age of single-parent homes, drugs, gangs, and other problems in our dynamic society), will they gain these appropriate life-skills somewhere else?

Perhaps it is necessary for our educational system to redefine its purpose if such questions are ever going to be answered:

> [Our educational system] can no longer serve as merely an institution which provides information, facts, and formulas for growing minds. It must also embrace the notion that it has become an absent parent as well; it has become the training ground and source of ethics and moral preparation for our children, and thus must provide strong models and programs for social behavior (Malm, 1992, p. 16).

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Appendix A

Steps Used In Conflict Resolution

1. Identify the problem
2. Focus on the problem
3. Attack the problem, not each other
4. Listen with an open mind
5. Treat other people's feelings with respect
6. Take responsibility for one's actions

Schmidt, F., & Friedman, A. (1987). Strategies for solving classroom conflicts. Learning, 15(6), 40-42.

Appendix B

Things to Avoid During a Conflict

1. Name calling
2. Putting someone down
3. Inattention
4. Bringing up the past
5. Blaming
6. Bossing
7. Pushing and hitting
8. Getting even
9. Making threats
10. Making excuses for one's behavior
11. Interrupting

Schmidt, F., & Friedman, A. (1987). Strategies for solving classroom conflicts. Learning, 15(6), 40-42.

Appendix C

Teacher As Mediator

1. Don't take sides; listen impartially
2. Don't allow students to interrupt each other
3. Ask students to repeat what the other has said
4. Summarize feelings
5. Ask students to explain how they feel
6. Point out areas of agreement
7. Ask students to provide solutions
8. Guide students in evaluating their choices
9. Offer alternative solutions when necessary
10. Help students reach a fair agreement
11. Provide support and encouragement

Schmidt, F., & Friedman, A. (1987). Strategies for solving classroom conflicts. Learning, 15(6), 40-42.

Appendix D

Advantages of Teaching Conflict Resolution Strategies

1. Everyone wins
2. Academic Learning Time increases
3. Students' self-esteem, social skills, and perspective-taking skills improve
4. Students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills improve
5. Communication and teamwork among students increase
6. Responsibilities and autonomy of students increase
7. Misbehavior and tension decrease

Schmidt, F., & Friedman, A. (1987). Strategies for solving classroom conflicts. Learning, 15(6), 40-42.

Appendix E

The Pattern That Kids Learn

1. State their feelings
2. Address the others involved in the conflict
3. Identify the problem
4. How to be an active listener
5. Restate information
6. Brainstorm and offer solutions
7. Reach consensus

Schmidt, F., & Friedman, A. (1987). Strategies for solving classroom conflicts. Learning, 15(6), 40-42.

Appendix F

Hostile Aggression

Setting: At recess, two students were playing when one suddenly hit the other in the back, making her fall down.

Julie: (sobbing as she approaches Mrs. M)
Mrs. M: Why are you crying, Julie? What's the problem?

Step 1: Identify the Problem

Julie: Greg hit me in the back and then I fell down.
Mrs. M: Go tell Greg to come here.
(The two students return).
Mrs. M: Greg, do you have any idea why Julie's crying?
Greg: I pushed her.
Mrs. M: Why?
Greg: Because I wanted to get her.
Mrs. M: What do you mean? Get her attention?
Greg: I don't know.

Step 2: Focus on the Problem

Mrs. M: Well, Julie's crying because you pushed her.
Greg: Well, she wouldn't answer me.

Step 3: Attack the Problem, not each other

Mrs. M: That doesn't matter. What matters is that you pushed her and she's crying. You hurt Julie and she's not happy. What can you do to solve this problem? What is the rule?
Greg: Keep your hands to yourself.

Step 4: Listen with an open mind

Mrs. M: Is there another way you could get her attention?
Greg: Ask nicely.

Appendix F (continued)

Step 5: Treat other people's feelings with respect

Mrs. M: Julie, can you tell Greg how it made you feel when he pushed you?
Julie: He was being ugly to me.
Mrs. M: Greg, how do you think you'd feel if someone hit you in the back?
Greg: Sad.

Step 6: Take responsibility for one's actions

Mrs. M: Greg, are you going to push the next time you want someone's attention?
Greg: No.

End of Conflict

Appendix G

Instrumental Aggression

Setting: Two students, Brian and Sue, were coloring with markers. Brian suddenly grabbed the marker from Sue.

Brian: Give me the marker...I need the blue. (He grabs it).
Sue: I'm using that one (begins sobbing). Give it back.
Brian: No, I need it.
Sue: I'm telling Mrs. M.
(After Sue screams out for the teacher, Mrs. M approaches the students' table).

Step 1: Identify the Problem

Mrs. M: What's going on over here? Sue, why are you crying?
Sue: Brian grabbed the marker from me.
Brian: I needed it.
Sue: I wasn't finished using it.
Mrs. M: So, you are fighting over a marker. Do you think that's necessary?

Step 2: Focus on the Problem

Sue: I had it first.
Mrs. M: That doesn't matter. What matters is that you're fighting over the marker. How many blue markers do we have in this classroom?
Brian: A lot.
Sue: He didn't have to take mine.

Step 3: Attack the Problem, not each other

Mrs. M: With all the markers in this room, is it necessary to fight over this one?
Sue: No.
Brian: No.

Appendix G (continued)

Step 4: Listen with an open mind

Mrs. M: Brian, is there a nicer way you could have gotten the marker from Sue?
Brian: Yes...(stutters). I could have asked her nicely.
Mrs. M: What else could you have done?
Brian: I don't know.
Sue: Gotten the other markers out.

Step 5: Treat other people's feelings with respect

Mrs. M: Sue, tell Brian how grabbing the marker made you feel.
Sue: Sad.
Mrs. M: Brian, is there something you want to tell Sue?
Brian: Yeah...sorry.

Step 6: Take responsibility for one's actions

Mrs. M: What are you going to do to make sure this doesn't happen again?
Brian: Ask nice.
Sue: Get other markers.

End of Conflict

Appendix H

Blaming

Setting: Bill and Jim are arguing as each yells, "Did not" or "Did to" to one another. Bill begins sobbing. Mrs. M overhears and approaches the children.

Step 1: Identify the Problem

Mrs. M: Can someone tell me what's going on here?
Bill: Jim threw a block at me and hurt my wrist.
Jim: Nuh uh.
Bill: Yes he did, and it hurts me right here (points to wrist).
Jim: It's not my fault.

Step 2: Focus on the Problem

Mrs. M: We're not going to talk about whose fault it is. Bill is upset and wants you to know why.
Jim: He blames me for everything.

Step 3: Attack the Problem, not each other

Mrs. M: We're not going to talk about blaming. Is there a reason why Bill might think you threw the block at him?
Jim: I don't know.

Step 4: Listen with an open mind

Mrs. M: Could you have given the block to Bill in a nicer way?
Jim: Yes.
Mrs. M: How?
Jim: Take it to him.
Bill: You didn't have to throw it at me. You could have given it to me.

Step 5: Treat other people's feelings with respect

Mrs. M: Jim, is there something you want to tell Bill?
Jim: I'm sorry. It was an accident.

Appendix H (continued)

Step 6: Take responsibility for one's actions

Mrs. M: How are you going to make sure this doesn't happen again?
Jim: Be careful.
Bill: Not throw the block.

End of Conflict

Appendix I

Bossing

Setting: During math time, students were working on a sequencing activity that involved connecting the dots in numerical order to form different shapes, in this case, heart-shaped.

Angela: You're not doing it right. Make hearts like me.
Gary: Don't listen to her.
Tonya: We don't have to do it your way.
Angela: Make it heart-shaped (yelling loudly and rudely).
(Mrs. M overhears and approaches the students).

Step 1: Identify the Problem

Mrs. M: What's going on over here?
Angela: I wanted them to make a heart shape.
Tonya: I can make other shapes if I want to.
Gary: Angela was telling us what to do.

Step 2: Focus on the Problem

Mrs. M: Angela, why do you think they need to make shapes like yours?
Angela: I don't know.
Mrs. M: Is that necessary?
Angela: No.

Step 3: Attack the Problem, not each other

Mrs. M: Angela, why do you think Gary and Tonya are upset with you?
Angela: For telling them what to do.

Step 4: Listen with an open mind

Mrs. M: Do you think it makes other people happy when you boss them, Angela?
Angela: No.
Mrs. M: Tonya and Gary, did you tell Angela how

Appendix I (continued)

her bossing made you feel?
Tonya: No...I didn't like it.
Gary: Me too.

Step 5: Treat other people's feelings with respect

Mrs. M: Angela, what can you do to make them feel better?
Angela: Say I'm sorry....Sorry (looking at them).

Step 6: Take responsibility for one's actions

Mrs. M: What can you do the next time you want someone to do something?
Angela: Ask them.

End of Conflict

Appendix J

Tattling

Setting: Students are gathering for afternoon circle when Cathy approaches Mrs. M to tell her that Matthew has taken too long at the water fountain.

Cathy: Mrs. M, Matthew took a long time getting water.
Mrs. M: Who do you need to talk to about this?
Cathy: Matthew.
Mrs. M: Then ask Matthew to come here.
(The two students return).

Step 1: Identify the Problem

Mrs. M: What's the problem? Matthew, why is Cathy upset with you?
Matthew: I don't know. I didn't do anything.
Cathy: Yes, you did. You took a lot of water while I was waiting.

Step 2: Focus on the Problem &
Step 3: Attack the Problem, not each other

Cathy: You always take too much (starts to cry).
Matthew: No, I don't. You're lying.
Mrs. M: Is it necessary to fight at the water fountain?
Both: No.

Step 4: Listen with an open mind

Mrs. M: Is it fair to stay at the water fountain when others are waiting?
Cathy: No.
Matthew: No.
Mrs. M: Matthew, what should you do when others are waiting?
Matthew: I don't know.
Cathy: Let somebody else get some water.
Mrs. M: Matthew, do you agree?
Matthew: Yes.

Appendix J (continued)

Step 5: Treat other people's feelings with respect

Mrs. M: Cathy, tell Matthew how you felt when he took too long at the water fountain.
Cathy: It made me unhappy.
Mrs. M: Matthew, is there anything you want to say to Cathy?
Matthew: I guess. I'm sorry.

Step 6: Take responsibility for one's actions

Mrs. M: What can you do to make sure this doesn't happen again?
Matthew: Not take so long.
Cathy: Hurry so someone else can have a turn.

End of Conflict